



*8th Annual Emerging and Existing  
Businesses of the Year Ceremony*

*March 15, 2011  
The Dillon House  
Topeka, Kansas*



# Welcome Kansas Small Business Development Center Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year!



Governor Sam Brownback

On behalf of all Kansans I would like to offer congratulations to the exemplary business leaders being honored by the Kansas Small Business Development Center.

It is the role of Government to provide an atmosphere in which businesses may flourish and innovation prosper and you are testament to exactly that. In the worst of economic conditions you forged ahead and set the standard for others to follow, and I commend you on your myriad successes. It will be through your efforts that the economic challenges of today become the victories of tomorrow.

I applaud you, the recipients of the 2010 Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year, on your leadership, your vision, and your service to community. I wish you nothing but continued success and prosperity.

— Governor Sam Brownback



Greg Panichello  
KSBDC State Director

It is with great pleasure that the KSBDC team recognizes the achievements of the 2010 Emerging and Existing Businesses of the Year. Our consultants selected fifteen businesses out of approximately 2,400 businesses receiving KSBDC counseling services.

It was with great care that your consultant selected you for this award. Some of the things considered included:

- Your vision
- Your ability to overcome obstacles
- Your service to your community and
- Your success in establishing and growing your business.

All of your efforts greatly contribute to the health of the Kansas economy. Congratulations on a successful year! The KSBDC team has enjoyed working with you and we look forward to assisting you as you grow your business.

— Greg Panichello





## **2010 Emerging & Existing Businesses of the Year Awards Ceremony March 15, 2011**

Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Edward H. Hammond, President, Fort Hays State University

3:00 p.m. Welcome — Greg Panichello, KSBDc State Director

3:05 p.m. Introductions — Dr. Hammond

Keynote Speaker

Dave Dreiling

Owner, GTM Sportswear

3:30 p.m. Video Presentation

3:50 p.m. Network with award recipients/refreshments

4:20 p.m. Presentation of plaques to award recipients by their elected officials.  
Photos will be taken immediately following each award presentation.

4:55 p.m. Closing remarks – Greg Panichello

### **Dave Dreiling Owner, GTM Sportswear Inc.**

#### **About our Keynote Speaker ...**



Dave Dreiling is the founder of GTM Sportswear, a Manhattan, Kansas, company that has grown over 25% annually since it began in 1989. GTM sells customized imprinted sportswear to athletic teams, cheer and gymnastic squads, corporations, booster clubs, and other related markets through the United States and abroad. GTM has expanded to include two retail stores in Lawrence, Kansas, and Omaha, Nebraska, as well as The K-State Super Store and Cats Closet in Manhattan and The KU Superstore in Lawrence. In 2007, GTM was placed on the inaugural *Inc. 5000* list of fastest growing privately owned companies and has remained there since. Dreiling's honors

include being named Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year for the Central Midwest Region in 2007; Entrepreneur of the Year finalist by *Inc. Magazine* for the states of Kansas and Missouri in 1994; and Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration for the State of Kansas in 1992.

Dreiling also founded Cushion Seats, Inc., which leases semi-permanent cushioned chair backs to season ticket holders in over 50 college football stadiums in the United States. He recently opened Max Fitness, with two locations in Manhattan. He has holdings in various restaurants including Quizno's, Freddy's Frozen Custard, Ingredient, Coco Bolo's, and Cox Bros. BBQ. Dreiling administers the Growth Coach franchise in Kansas, which works to improve the lives and businesses of small business owners and corporate executives. Dreiling's companies employ more than 1,100 people in northeast Kansas.

Dreiling serves on the National Board of Directors of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners. He founded the Council of Civic Organizations, where leaders of all local civic clubs gather to discuss, collaborate and improve community needs and services that are not being met. Dreiling has served as the president of the Flinthills Breadbasket, and often lectures to classes and student groups at Kansas State University, where he earned his BS in Business Administration. He is the current Treasurer of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce. Because of his outstanding efforts in the community, Dreiling was named the Lud Fiser Citizen of the Year Award by the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce in 2009. To relax, Dave enjoys hunting, fishing, and traveling with his wife, Kristen, and their two children, Tyler and Morgan.



# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



"We were referred by our lender to contact the KSBDC to see if this would be a good investment for us. We contacted them from the very beginning and they have been with us every step of the way and are still helping us after two years of being in business."

– Jena Johnson, Co-owner



Jena and Doug purchased the Breckenridge Café in 2008 and renamed it The New Breck.

**Emporia State University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

1200 Commercial Street  
Cremer Hall, Room 130  
Campus Box 1046  
Emporia, Kansas 66801  
Phone (620) 341-5308  
[www.emporia.edu/sbdc](http://www.emporia.edu/sbdc)

## The New Breck

<b>Owner</b>	Doug Disney and Jena Johnson
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Restaurant
<b>City</b>	Americus
<b>County</b>	Lyon
<b>Phone</b>	620-443-5612
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	2008
<b>Employees</b>	17
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Gwen Spade

What do you do when the only restaurant in your community is going to close? Just buy it! Two years ago when the Breckenridge Café in Americus, Kansas prepared to close its doors, that's exactly what Doug Disney and Jena Johnson did. The café had operated as a community-owned restaurant for 20 years and as investors aged they were ready to retire and move on. As is evident in many small rural towns, the local café is a gathering spot, information exchange, visitor's bureau, and last but not least, a place to get great local food and service with a smile.

When Doug & Jena purchased the old Breckenridge Café in 2008, they renamed it "The New Breck" and overhauled the menu. The ESU KSBDC and consultant, Gwen Spade assisted Doug & Jena with their cash flow projections, business plan, business valuation, ownership structure, QuickBooks set-up and employment related questions.

### Secret to Success

**"The customers are our secret to our success. They are the best advertising that we have. If you have quality and consistency in your product then your satisfied customers will do the rest."**

Their greatest challenge has been reprogramming the community about what they offer and getting people accustomed to it. The community had become used to the old café and it took a concentrated effort to make people realize it was the same type of business, in the same place, with new offerings. This was accomplished by constantly interacting and communicating with people in the community and the surrounding area.

Like many small town restaurants they rely on their "regulars." Many of these "regulars" are there daily, and others, a little less often. Still, these loyal customers provide the best advertising as they tell their friends and others about the great food and environment at The New Breck.

Even prior to opening The New Breck, Doug and Jena were involved in community events including Americus Days, the Save the Americus Pool Committee and the local PTO. Since opening the business, they have continued these activities and consider it one way the business can contribute to the community. Since opening, they have been asked to do a fundraiser in which teachers and an administrator served as wait staff for an evening and a percentage of the sales were donated to the school's PTO. They regularly host community meetings for community groups and organizations. Additionally, they serve as the central portal for information on area events since they are open seven days a week.

Their advice to other potential entrepreneurs is, "Do your research before you make a decision. Contact the KSBDC and they will help you to make a very knowledgeable decision. They have the tools to help you and the cost is nothing."

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



~ a place to restore your soul ~

"I believe the best advice that we received from the SBDC was that our business could survive in spite of all the changes that were occurring around the coffee shop with seven years of construction and with the economic challenges. The foundation of our business had all the right components to be successful. We needed the tools to help us sustain, modify, and then grow. SBDC provided those tools."

- Bev Beers,  
Manager and Barista



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## Granada Coffee Company

<b>Owner</b>	Rocky Slaymaker
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Coffee shop. Retail, Catering
<b>City</b>	Emporia
<b>County</b>	Lyon
<b>Phone</b>	620-342-4001
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:granadacoffeecompany@yahoo.com">granadacoffeecompany@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	Sole Proprietorship
<b>Business Began</b>	2002
<b>Employees</b>	4
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Lisa Brumbaugh & Jim Stephens

Located in the restored French Revival Granada Theater in Emporia's theatre district, Granada Coffee Company is the passion of Rocky Slaymaker and devoted manager and barista Beverly Beers. Rocky worked in the California movie industry for 16 years and has a flair for design. He returned to Emporia in 2002 with a desire to revive his childhood memories and bring the Granada retail space back to life remodeling it with period décor and local memorabilia.

With a love of coffee, Rocky deliberated in selecting coffee types to serve his discriminating coffee customers. The first years were lean with the \$2.9 million theatre renovation in progress next door and difficult local economic conditions.

Additionally, during the Coffee Company's tenure, they have been through two other major renovations of their neighbors; one on each side. The loyal core of customers and great customer service has carried the business through. Rocky and Beverly take great pride in giving their coffee customers personalized attention.

### Secret to Success

"Granada Coffee Company has always focused on customer service, quality products, a warm and clean environment, and drink consistency. Our staff is well trained, dedicated, and we all love what we do!"

Many current customers started with the Granada Coffee Company when the doors were first opened and continue to support the company with their patronage and more importantly their word-of-mouth accolades. Beverly is instrumental in hiring, training and supervising coffee baristas who are knowledgeable and personable. Service is critical in the competitive retail coffee business. The coffee tastes better when it is served by a smiling face, accompanied by a pleasant greeting. Other components of the business are a catering service and consignment gifts also managed by Bev.

After five difficult years, Granada Coffee Company reached out to the Emporia State University KSBDC. Consultant Lisa Brumbaugh helped to put the financial picture on track with honest and sound financial advice. The second adjustment was understanding and using the value of marketing. With the assistance of consultant, Jim Stephens, Bev has created an effective and efficient marketing program.

Rocky and Bev continually strive to improve the business. They also contribute tirelessly to the business health of other retailers and the Emporia community through the Emporia-Flint Hills Celebration, the Emporia Arts Council, Emporia Main Street, Camp Alexander, and the United Way. Voted, "The Best Coffee of the Flint Hills" from 2004 to 2010. Rocky and Bev have many reasons to celebrate!



# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



## Couture for Men

<b>Owner</b>	Leland Olive
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Men's Apparel
<b>City</b>	Hays
<b>County</b>	Ellis
<b>Phone</b>	785 - 621- 4905
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:couture@ruraltel.net">couture@ruraltel.net</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	2007
<b>Employees</b>	3
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Ron Newman



"I would encourage anyone anticipating opening their own business to go for it. It takes a lot of work and dedication, but the will to succeed and a good business plan will be the keys to achieving your goals."

— Leland Olive, Owner



**Fort Hays State University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

600 Park Street  
105 Custer Hall  
Hays, KS 67601-3602  
Phone (785) 628-5615  
[www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc](http://www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc)

Leland Olive spent 24 years managing Kline's Department Store. When it closed he decided to shift gears and go for his dream of owning his own retail operation. He chose the apparel business and realized that his biggest challenge would be to determine how to compete with big box stores in the area. Soon, he realized he couldn't compete if he carried the same brands they offered. Therefore, he looked for brands that would not open more than one account in a region and would not sell to the big chains.

He looked for, and found a product not found elsewhere in the area. He became a member of Northwest Buyers (N.W. Buyers), a premier membership-only menswear buying group that facilitates the purchase and delivery of merchandise to member stores from over 180 affiliated resources.

### Secret to Success

"Offering a product that is not found anywhere else in the area has been our secret to success."

Leland encourages anyone anticipating opening their own business, to "Go for it." He stated it takes a lot of work and dedication, but the will to succeed and a good business plan will be the keys to achieving your goals. Leland finds that one of the best parts about being a business owner is being able to know your customers and giving them the products and service they desire. The next best thing is the freedom that comes from being a business owner.

Leland is a member of the Hays Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2009 and 2010 Couture for Men received the "Best Place to Shop for Men's Apparel" designation.

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



**MFG & OPERATING, INC.**  
*"Many options with one hat"*



**"The best part about being an entrepreneur and having your own business is knowing that you started with a dream and built that dream to be a successful business and that the opportunities are there to develop and expand the business."**

**— Thomas McGlinn and  
Craig Pangburn**

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## T & C MFG & Operating, Inc.

<b>Owners</b>	Craig Pangburn and Thomas McGlinn
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Manufacturing, Rubber Molding and Environmental Consulting
<b>Business Address</b>	1020 Hoover Street, Great Bend, KS 67530
<b>Phone</b>	800-533-5480
<b>Email</b>	T-C@tcmfg.com
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tcmfg.com">www.tcmfg.com</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	Corporation
<b>Business Began</b>	1996
<b>Employees</b>	22 full time, 6 part time
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Ron Newman

Two employees seized the opportunity to buy a portion of an existing business for which they had been employed. As they formed their new business, they felt they could lend the expertise, knowledge and desire to develop the business into something profitable and expansive. T & C MFG and Operating, Inc. is a small custom rubber molding and environmental consulting company located in Great Bend, KS. The Custom Rubber Molding division specializes in manufacturing rubber products for the irrigation, commercial, oilfield, industrial, medical, and wastewater markets using compression and injection molding processes. The Environmental Consulting division provides Mechanical Integrity Testing (MIT) and regulatory compliance expertise of underground hydrocarbon storage wells in Kansas. The MIT testing of the hydrocarbon storage wells is important, as it helps the industry remain in compliance with regulations enforced by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).

The newly acquired company contacted KSBDC for enhanced knowledge about financial assistance that might be available. While consulting with KSBDC, they gained information on availability of grants, trade shows, and assistance with training. The primary challenge was hiring qualified employees and maintaining cash flow until the company became established. As the company prospered, they were able to retain and gain qualified employees by offering competitive salaries and incentives.

### Secret to Success

**"Do your homework  
and keep your eyes  
and ears on the  
competition."**

The owners indicated they would tell anyone asking for advice on opening a business to do their homework on establishing a business work plan and to be honest with themselves on pitfalls they might encounter in order to be profitable enough to proceed with the business. They also advise to always keep your eyes and ears on the competition!

T & C MFG & Operating, Inc. has taken pride in being a good business citizen of their area through involvement with United Way, CASA, Chamber of Commerce, Special Olympics, police and sheriff organizations, city beautification projects, and various youth sports programs. They are also actively involved in the American Petroleum Institute, Ground Water Protection Council, Solution Mining Research Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers and Desk & Derrick Clubs.



# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



## Accelacare Physical Therapy

<b>Owner</b>	Wes and Amy Wickwar
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Physical Therapy
<b>City</b>	Garden City
<b>County</b>	Finney County
<b>Phone</b>	620-271-0700
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	2007
<b>Employees</b>	8
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Patricia Veasart



Wes Wickwar had always wanted to start his own physical therapy practice. In 2007, the perfect opportunity arose at the right time in the right environment. He had recently finished his fellowship training and felt like his clinical skills were at a high enough level to shift his focus to owning and operating a business.

Wes contacted the KSBDC for assistance in the start-up process. "Pat did a great job of guiding me through the planning phase with a checklist of all tasks that had to be complete prior to opening. She also proved to be invaluable by providing us with important resources and contacts needed."

"The KSBDC has been very helpful since our opening by continuing to be readily available by phone or email to answer a multitude of business questions that we've had."

Wes Wickwar – Co-owner



He felt the biggest challenge to overcome was his lack of any previous business or management experience. Wes met that challenge by completing a yearlong physical therapy-based business management program. He hired technical consultants from his industry for specific issues and communicates with other physical therapy business owners, which he feels has helped considerably.

### Secret to Success

**"Adequate planning before opening your business and treating your employees like you treat your best customers."**

So in addition to working with the KSBDC, he would strongly recommend that prospective business owners have processes and systems in place prior to opening up. "A lack of adequate planning and preparation before opening a business can lead to problems down the road once you get busy and don't have as much time. I would also tell them to treat their employees like their best customers, which is the most important piece of advice I was given."

Employees are one the real keys to business success. An owner cannot handle every customer, which is where good employees make the difference. "I've been fortunate enough to hire employees with tremendous character who are extremely motivated to succeed. I strive to treat each employee like my best customer and challenge them to grow as much as possible. I believe that happy employees who are motivated will lead to satisfied customers."

**Garden City Community College  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

801 Campus Dr.  
Garden City, Kansas 67846-6333  
(620) 276-9632  
[www.swksbdc.com](http://www.swksbdc.com)

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



## Fleener Funeral Home

<b>Owner</b>	J Wynn Fleener
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Funeral Home
<b>City</b>	Greensburg
<b>County</b>	Kiowa County
<b>Phone</b>	620-723-2612
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	1907
<b>Employees</b>	2
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Mark Buckley

**"My advice to someone who wants to open a business is, know your resources and get business development assistance from the KSBDC. They will help you with the due diligence, help you study the market, and help you identify your assets and liabilities."**

**J Wynn Fleener – Owner**



Greensburg business leaders come together for the groundbreaking of the new Fleener Funeral Home.

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Fleener's Funeral Home was established in 1907 by William Lewis Fleener and J Wynn is a fourth generation owner. J Wynn found it easy to follow his father's advice to "assume an existing business instead of starting a new one from scratch." As a funeral director, J Wynn experiences the rewards of helping families through difficult times. He also found the importance in the responsibility of taking over a business with a strong reputation and offering the service that is expected of an established name.

When the EF5 tornado struck Greensburg in May 2007, it destroyed both J Wynn's home and his business. He contacted the KSBDC outreach center in Greensburg for assistance in evaluating his options.

"Mark helped evaluate whether I should rebuild, at what cost I could afford and the market that remained for my services."

With no funeral home or embalming facilities, embalming duties were moved to Pratt and services were held in Mullinville and Haviland churches. J Wynn states, "I did not attend business school and my continuing education has been in the area of mortuary law, but with the help of the KSBDC and Mark, I received a crash course in business and business techniques."

"Personal Relationship best describes what Mark did to help me rebuild. He was helpful in developing a business plan and gave that "personal touch" throughout the process, from helping decide the cost of the new facility to attending the ground breaking ceremonies."

The Fleener family has not only been active as a business member of the community but with local organizations. J Wynn serves on the Greensburg School Board, and is an active member of the business recovery team. He also participates in Youth for Christ as a volunteer laborer and Care and Share as a volunteer laborer.

The City of Greensburg has much to be proud of in the residents and business owners who took devastation and turned it into an opportunity to rebuild stronger, better and greener!

### Secret to Success

**"Service is the secret to the Fleener Funeral Home's success. Following the standard of service that was established by my forefathers made Fleener's what it is today."**

# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



## The Next Step, Inc. / WOTC Solutions, LLC



<b>Owners</b>	John L. White
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Nationwide employment services/WOTC placement
<b>City</b>	Lenexa
<b>County</b>	Johnson
<b>Phone</b>	913-894-2601
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="https://thenextstep99.com/index.php">https://thenextstep99.com/index.php</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	TNS in 2001 and WOTC in 2009
<b>Employees</b>	7-10
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	John Addressi

"I found my KSBDC consultant to be professional, involved, knowledgeable and creative in suggesting various strategies for maximizing the potential and execution of my business model."

— John L. White, Owner



Adam White works as Director of Business Development for The Next Step/ WOTC Solutions, Inc.

**Johnson County  
Community College  
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12345 College Blvd.  
Overland Park, Kansas 66210-1299

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[www.jccc.edu/ksbdc](http://www.jccc.edu/ksbdc)

Business models often address a particular "pain point" they solve with their technology or knowledge. The Next Step, Inc. / WOTC Solutions, LLC solves several pain points at once: soaring criminal recidivism rates, small business labor costs and the ongoing struggles in finding employment in a tough job market..

The Next Step/WOTC Solutions' proprietary database technology matches job seekers with "WOTC-friendly employers" who have utilized the Work Opportunity Tax credit, a federal program which encourages employers to hire disadvantaged workers. Owner John White notes, however, that "employers who do hire WOTC-eligible employees often need professional help in collecting the WOTC. There are numerous pitfalls in obtaining the credit and the percentage of qualifying employers who actually obtain it is very small nationally."

The Next Step/WOTC Solutions facilitates this tax credit collection process, significantly lowering payroll expenses — e.g., an \$8 per hour entry-level worker only costs the employer around \$5 per hour. The risk to the employer is negligible as The Next Step only gets paid if the employer actually receives the tax credit. Employers often find their new hires are excellent workers, proving themselves worthy of the second chance.

The result is truly a win-win for all concerned: Traditionally hard-to-hire workers are given improved chances of finding jobs, the employers reap significant savings in labor costs and the colleges and corrections systems experience better hire rates for their students and releasees. Getting the word out to the 92% of employers that don't yet utilize the WOTC program is a daunting task, however. John adds, "Persuading the potential consumers of this product to spend the time analyzing its usefulness in the operation of their own businesses is the key challenge. Webinars, ongoing product and processes refinement and constant marketing are how we overcome these challenges." Thus, John's advice for others starting a business: "Plan your marketing and change it when it isn't working."

The future looks bright for The Next Step. John and his team work diligently to educate employers about how the program can include employment of service-disabled veterans, recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, vocational rehabilitation referrals, Katrina survivors and several other covered categories. John maintains that the best part of being an entrepreneur is that "the future is in your own hands." And, perhaps best of all, the workers who find jobs through The Next Step's efforts have prospects for a genuinely better future.

### Secret to Success

**"Persistence, patience and the somewhat related quality of flexibility have gotten us to where we are."**

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



## Weather or Not, Inc.

<b>Owner</b>	Sara Croke
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Meteorological consulting/Specialized forecasting
<b>City</b>	Shawnee
<b>County</b>	Johnson
<b>Phone</b>	913 - 722 - 3955
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.weatherornot.com">www.weatherornot.com</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	S Corporation
<b>Business Began</b>	1985
<b>Employees</b>	12
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Elisa Waldman

# Weather or Not®

Your Business Is On Our Radar

"The KSBDC helps us to bring focus and clarity to every opportunity, allowing Weather or Not to develop a winning strategy during unpredictable times. Elisa Waldman listens, brainstorms, evaluates, recommends and then listens again. The KSBDC has been an invaluable partner in the growth of Weather or Not."

— Sara Croke, Owner



*Sara is updated on how the weather will affect their clients.*

At the conclusion of a successful career in television weather broadcasting, Sara Croke found herself passionate about weather and eager to create a business focused on meteorology. She paired her seasoned forecasting skills with her intense appreciation for accuracy and outstanding customer service to launch Weather or Not, Inc. Weather or Not is a 24/7 weather consulting service that delivers custom forecasts to companies whose business needs depend on weather. Sara identifies unmet forecasting needs among weather-dependent businesses and now boasts regional clients in a wide range of industries including public works, airports, construction, parks and recreation, schools, snow removal, and athletics.

Since 1985, Weather or Not has grown to 12 employees. Sara enjoys mentoring her employees and learning from them. In this high-tech age, Sara realizes the benefits of applying human intelligence and a personal approach to the scientific development of forecasts. Weather or Not's customized services increase awareness, lead-time, profitability and job safety for companies by making them aware of the weather before it happens. After the storm, it is Weather or Not's detailed reporting that supplies many businesses with the budget justification for expensive resources needed to manage facilities and road crews.

Sara has worked with the SBDC in many capacities. Before opening the business, she attended an SBDC introductory class; today, she continues to meet with a KSBDC consultant to work on growth strategies. According to Sara, the KSBDC provides her with the grounding to navigate through dozens of options and opportunities. Most recent among these opportunities was the innovation of A+ Weather Alerts, a unique text messaging technology. Sara worked with the KSBDC to design a multi-year financial planning tool which was critical in securing the funding needed to develop the new technology. Sara describes the KSBDC as "keeping pace with our ever-changing business landscape and offering relevant resources and strategies along the way."

Sara embraces the freedom that entrepreneurship affords her. She thrives on designing new products and creating unique solutions to solve customer needs. As a KSBDC client, Sara is most impressed by the robust offering of KSBDC resources, such as cost-efficient training, invitations to attend business seminars, and connections to local professionals. In return, Sara offers guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs through her many community commitments, mentoring programs and professional networking. Sara looks forward to continuing to expand the products and services of Weather or Not, meeting the future needs of businesses today.

### Secret to Success

"Reaching out to successful entrepreneurs and skilled business advisors is the key to business growth. It is imperative to surround yourself with people who have traversed the same path in pursuit of happiness and profitability."

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# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



## Audio / Video Concepts



<b>Owner</b>	Shawn Markley
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Audio/Video Concepts LLC
<b>City</b>	Ottawa
<b>County</b>	Franklin
<b>Phone</b>	785-242-1909
<b>Business Structure</b>	Limited Liability Company
<b>Business Began</b>	2007
<b>Employees</b>	2
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Maggie Bornholdt

“Maggie was very helpful with suggestions and helped us come up with a business plan to obtain the financing we needed to purchase a building, renovate, and expand inventory. Patience and persistence paid off, and along with the help of the KSBDC, we were able to get our project completed.”

— Shawn Markley, Owner



Shawn Markley has a long-standing passion for electronics. For 11 years prior to the opening of Audio/Video Concepts, he ran another successful company. This eventually evolved into Audio/Video Concepts, LLC, which Shawn founded in 2007. By the fall of 2009, the business had reached a growth phase necessitating an expansion of the business location. After researching new site locations, Shawn visited with his local banker, who referred him to the KSBDC.

After months of hard work with the KSBDC refining the business plan and financial projections, Shawn obtained a loan to purchase a new building. More hard work ensued renovating the new site while concurrently operating the business out of the former location. On April 14, 2010, the new location of Audio/Video Concepts had their grand opening.

Audio/Video Concepts was created on the idea of quality products, customer service, all at a fair price. Their specialty is offering package deals for home and car entertainment needs, including home entertainment (retail and installation) such as home theaters and whole house sound systems, and car sound systems. They also offer remote car start installation and window tinting. They have recently expanded their offering to include boat sound systems and attended boat trade shows during the spring and summer of 2010.

“By far, the most important factor in our success is that we take care of our customers. We always give them what they ask for, not just what we want to sell them. We are committed to making sure the job is done right the first time!”

Shawn is an active member of the Ottawa, Kansas community, participating in Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce events and sponsoring local youth teams and events. Through the business, he plans to become involved in even more community activities in the future.

University of Kansas  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center

734 Vermont, Suite 104  
Lawrence, KS 66044

Phone (785) 843-8844  
Fax (785) 843-8878  
<http://www.kusbdcenter.org>

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



"The assistance that I've received from the University of Kansas Small Business Development Center has proven to be invaluable. The insight and knowledge of the staff have been an integral part of Printpop's success and I consider them to be a part of the Printpop team."

— Devin Walker, Co-Owner



Printpop.com co-founders Ladd Epp and Devin Walker.

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Phone (785) 843-8844  
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<http://www.kusbdnet>

## Printpop.com

<b>Owners</b>	Devin Walker and Ladd Epp
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Digital printing
<b>City</b>	Lawrence
<b>County</b>	Douglas
<b>Phone</b>	785-877-0778
<b>Business Structure</b>	Sole Proprietorship
<b>Business Began</b>	2003
<b>Employees</b>	4 Full-time and 19 Part-time
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Maggie Bornholdt, Will Katz, and Curt Clinkinbeard

Before digital printing was widely available, Devin Walker received a call from a high school friend. She had seen his artwork in the past and wanted a copy. Not having copies at the time, he took a digital picture of it and emailed it to her. A short time later, he ended up using the digital camera for an event with his daughter and wanted to provide copies for family. He ordered prints via snapfish.com to save printing costs, found the quality good and the idea came to him to do the same with original artwork. Thus emerged the concept of Printpop.com.

Printpop.com is an online destination for digital reproductions of artwork by aspiring, emerging, part-time or student artists. The website was built with the intention of helping artists everywhere gain exposure and also have the opportunity to make extra money. While artists could set up their own website to display artwork, Printpop.com allows them to sell high quality photographic prints of their work, while retaining all rights to their original pieces.

Printpop.com was also conceived with the notion that it can sometimes be hard to find unique, original artwork that is affordable. Now, whether it's the artist's mother or a young professional who wants to add artwork to his or her collection, there's an online gallery where literally hundreds of pieces are just a click away. From paintings of landscapes to abstract pieces, Printpop.com's galleries have something for everyone.

Artists who are on Printpop.com span the globe: Argentina, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Sweden, Australia, Chile, Finland, Ireland, Malta, The United Kingdom, Belgium, Columbia, France, Israel, New Zealand, South Africa, Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Italy, Poland, China, Greece, India, Brazil, Denmark, Hungary, Iran, and the Russian Federation and 43 U.S. States.

### Secret to Success

"Be humble, be thankful, try your best and treat people nice."

— Devin Walker, Co-Owner



# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



Growing Kansas Entrepreneurs



Savannah's advice for anyone opening or purchasing a business is to seek assistance from the KSBDC in developing a solid business plan. Doing so "really forces you to look at all aspects of the business and what potential obstacles and challenges you may face and how you're going to handle them. I had no idea how to write a business plan, and Tom gave me all the tools and advice I needed to develop a very thorough plan."

— Savannah Flory, Owner

TLC celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2010. Pictured are Levi Flory and Savannah (in center) along with several TLC staff members and ambassadors from the Iola Area Chamber of Commerce.



**Pittsburg State University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

1501 S. Joplin St.  
Pittsburg, KS 66762

Phone (620) 235-4920  
[www.pittstate.edu/bti/sbdc](http://www.pittstate.edu/bti/sbdc)

## TLC Garden Center

<b>Owner</b>	Savannah Flory
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Garden Center, Landscape Design and Installation
<b>City</b>	LaHarpe
<b>County</b>	Allen
<b>Phone</b>	620-496-1234
<b>Business Began</b>	2000
<b>Employees</b>	7
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Tom Byler

Savannah Flory became interested in garden centers and greenhouses when she went to "take your daughter to work day" with her mother, Corinna Heard, in sixth grade. In 2000, her mother started her own business, TLC Greenhouse and Garden Center in LaHarpe, Kansas, where Savannah worked while going to school. This led her to pursue a degree in Horticulture, with an emphasis on Landscape Design with the intention of eventually returning home to help run the family garden center. When Corinna passed away in 2006, Savannah, along with her fiancé and employees, kept the business going while finishing college. Upon graduating college in May 2007, she returned home to run the business full-time. Late in 2009, she purchased the business from her father, John Heard, and changed the business name to TLC Garden Center.

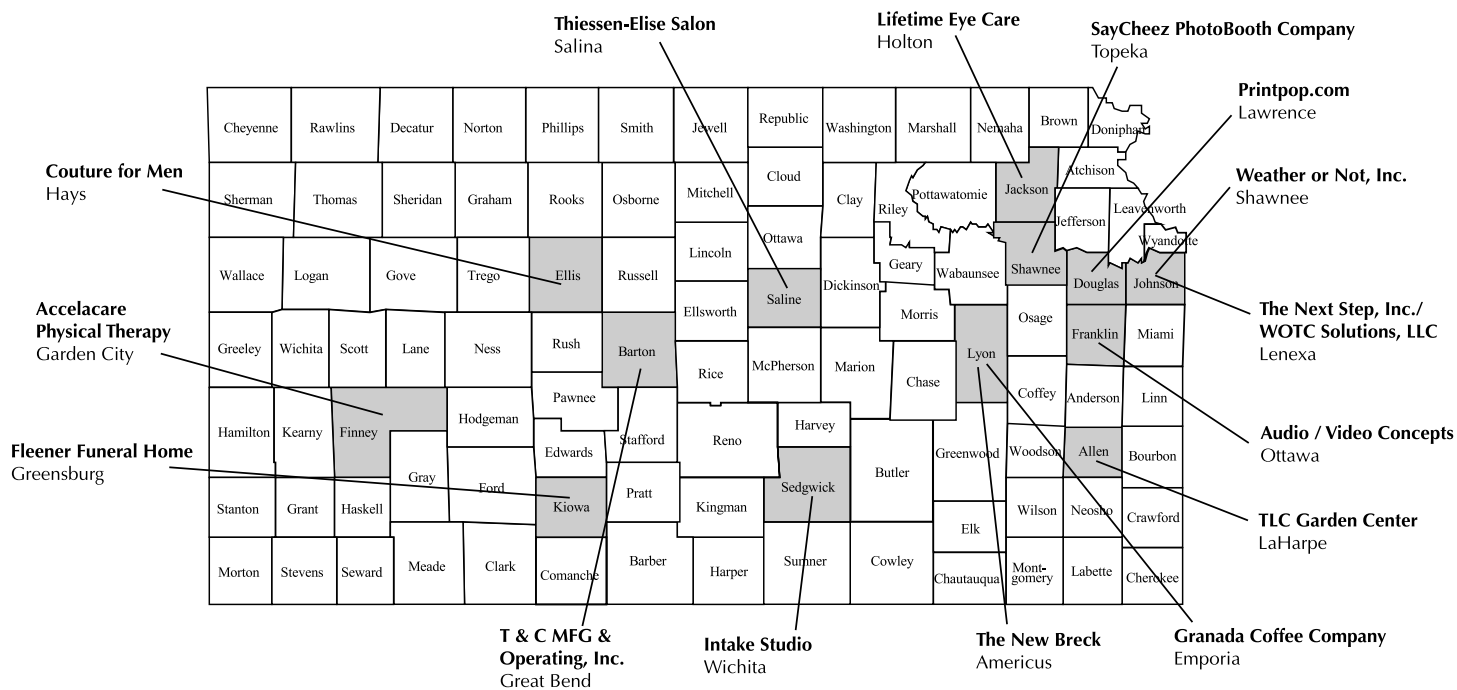
It was while considering the purchase of the business in the summer of 2009 that she contacted KSBDC Counselor Tom Byler. Savannah admits that, although she had been managing the business for several years, she really had no idea of where to start in the process of purchasing the business. Tom helped her determine who she needed to talk to, gave her ideas on where to obtain loans, and supplied her with the data and instruction needed in developing a business plan to help secure a loan from their bank. As a result, she was able to obtain a loan in the amount needed for capital and the purchase of the business.

Nearing the end of her first year of owning the business, she describes the challenges she has faced so far as "works in progress" and is still making adjustments and changes as problems arise. She constantly looks for ways to improve the business and provide customers with the quality experience and customer service that they deserve.

Savannah believes that hard work is the key to success for her business. This often means working 70-80 hours a week during the busy spring season. She explains that perceptions are not always accurate. "Some people may think that owning your own business gets you out of putting hours in that once you get to that point you get to set your own hours and work whenever you want. But that's not the case. In fact, in order to succeed, it's quite the opposite." However, she admits that the best part about owning her own business is the personal satisfaction she gets out of seeing the parking lot full and customers leaving with a smile on their face. "I love our type of business, because people who are shopping for flowers are just happy people. It is not something they have to buy, like groceries or gas; they come here because they want to and they enjoy it."

### Secret to Success

"I think that hard work is the key to success. You have to put the hours in to really know your business, research what other businesses in your field are doing to succeed, and never settle on being just average."



## Did you know ...

In 2009 KSBDC

- 1) Consulted with 2,411 clients
- 2) Provided 604 training seminars
- 3) with 5,562 in attendance

KSBDC 2009 Economic Impact

- 1) Started 294 new businesses
- 2) Created 1,114 jobs
- 3) Retained 1,220 jobs
- 4) Generated \$38 million in new sales

## Thank You Kansas Department of Commerce

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# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



The consulting provided by the KSBDC is a must for any business looking to excel. I recommend, just like going to the doctor for a check-up, you should schedule time with your KSBDC consultant. It helped us achieve success that we could not imagine.

– Nikki Lewien, Co-owner



**SayCheezPhotoBooth.com**  
1-800-SAY-CHEEZ

*Scott, Nikki, and Zeven Lewien, having fun in the Photo Booth.*

**Washburn University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**  
120 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Topeka, KS 66603-3515  
Phone (785) 234-3235  
[www.washburn.edu/sbdc](http://www.washburn.edu/sbdc)

## SayCheez PhotoBooth

<b>Owner</b>	Scott and Nikki Lewien
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Photo Booth Rental for Events
<b>City</b>	Topeka
<b>County</b>	Shawnee
<b>Phone</b>	1-800-Say-Cheez
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.Saycheezphotobooth.com">www.Saycheezphotobooth.com</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	Kansas Limited Liability Company
<b>Business Began</b>	2008
<b>Employees</b>	2 owners, 25 contractors
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Scott Taddiken

The SayCheez PhotoBooth Company started rather innocently. "We were looking for something different for our son's first birthday and thought that a photo booth would be fun. When we couldn't find an affordable option, Scott and I went to work making this contraption in our living room and backyard. Our friends and neighbors thought we were crazy, until the party. Everyone had so much fun that we were asked to bring it to their parties," explained Nikki. Before too long, strangers had heard the news, and were asking how to rent a photo booth for their events.

The entrepreneur in both Nikki and Scott kicked in. They decided to take their photo booth service to the Bridal Fair where they booked 26 weddings in 2 days. It was official, SayCheez was in business. That is when they met with Scott Taddiken at the Washburn KSBDC to ask questions about registering the business. What unfolded was so much more. Nikki remembers, "His excitement for our business helped us achieve success that we could not imagine. He was full of incredible ideas we hadn't even considered. It was 100% the jumping off point for us."

With hard work in that first year, SayCheez grew from one to four booths in the Topeka area with bookings most every weekend. Today, Scott and Nikki have grown SayCheez to twenty-five markets all over Kansas and around the country. Booths can be rented as far away as Seattle, WA. Considering this all started with a "crazy contraption" assembled in the backyard, SayCheez has come a long way in a short amount of time.

Some would equate this success with luck or being in the right place at the right time, but once you meet both Nikki and Scott you realize that this is simply not the case. This did not happen by accident, this is what can happen when you are an entrepreneur and work hard. What makes the SayCheez story truly remarkable is exactly what makes being an entrepreneur great.

"It is not taking "no" for an answer but saying "why not?" It is not planning to do something but actually doing it, even with limited resources. It is about being extremely smart and doing the right thing. It is about not giving up. It is about all those things and that is what is amazing about Nikki and Scott - recognition as KSBDC Emerging Business of the Year is well deserved," added Rick LeJuerne, regional director of the Washburn KSBDC.

### Secret to Success

**"The most important secret to our success is to never give up. Keep pushing, every day, all the time."**

– Nikki Lewien,  
Co-owner

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



## Lifetime Eye Care

<b>Owner</b>	Leslie Gallagher OD FAAO, Nicole Meerpohl, OD
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Optometry
<b>City</b>	Holton
<b>County</b>	Jackson
<b>Phone</b>	785 - 364 -5000
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.visionsource-holton.com">www.visionsource-holton.com</a>
<b>Business Structure</b>	S Corp.
<b>Business Began</b>	2005, 2009 as Lifetime Eye Care
<b>Employees</b>	13
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Mary Ann Riederer & Les Streit

lifetimeeyecare

"I would encourage others to open a business if they have a product or service that is needed or desired. I would recommend careful planning with help from organizations like KSBDC, especially with business plan assistance."



**Washburn University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

120 SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Topeka, KS 66603-3515

Phone (785) 234-3235  
[www.washburn.edu/sbdc](http://www.washburn.edu/sbdc)

In 2009, Doctor Leslie Gallagher and Doctor Nicole Meerpohl approached the KSBDC for assistance. After careful planning, these two optometrists, practicing independently in Holton, realized that merging their two offices would allow them to build a state of the art facility on the Holton square; and offer their patients in Holton and the surrounding communities, more comprehensive, expanded services through combined resources. Mary Ann Riederer and Les Streit, with the KSBDC, assisted them in preparing for the acquisition of funding for this project.

The doctors gave great consideration to this decision of partnering, examining every aspect before going forward. Early in the process, both even agreed that participating in personality tests would be a clear indicator for compatibility; ultimately the tests showed that their strengths perfectly compliment each other. They quickly confirmed that everything about this partnership pointed toward a successful relationship.

### Secret to Success

"Our secret is that we truly care about each patient. Providing great service comes easy when you appreciate your patient or customer."

– Leslie Gallagher, Co-owner

The design of the new office evolved naturally from the environment that the doctors desired for their patients and staff. Both beautiful and comfortable, it is built to accommodate everyone from 2 to 102-years-old. A children's corner with a 3-foot door, chalk board and toys inside, is a welcome space for little ones waiting for appointments. Investments in equipment not typically found in a community of 3,500 people were made for the benefit and convenience of the patients.

As women who grew up in small towns; the doctors believe strongly in corporate citizenship. In October, Lifetime Eye Care hosted Free Eye Health Screenings. This provided an opportunity for individuals to have a screening and during the program, several previously undiagnosed conditions were found. The program was a success and plans are to offer it annually.

Both doctors are mothers of small children, and they've personally enjoyed the benefits of this partnership built on respect and trust. Before the merger, one doctor remembers taking a two day maternity leave before returning to see patients! Now the doctors are able to spend more time with their families and a work /life balance is important to each person in the office. In addition to a professional atmosphere this office is a place where the culture is also one where strong friendships are formed. The large table in the second floor break room has become a place where birthdays are celebrated and office outings are planned.

With a truly wonderful staff and committed doctors, growth has exceeded projections, and the future for Lifetime Eye Care looks very bright!

# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



"The best thing about the KSBDC and Linda Sutton is their business planning and cash flow projection assistance."

– Amber Klassen



Wichita State University  
KSBDC Outreach Center  
North Central Kansas SBDC

606 Washington Street, Suite C

Concordia, Kansas 66901  
(785) 243-9913

[www.ncksbdc.com](http://www.ncksbdc.com)

## Thiessen-Elise Salon

<b>Owner</b>	John and Amber Klassen
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Salon
<b>City</b>	Salina
<b>County</b>	Saline
<b>Phone</b>	785-820-8220
<b>Business Structure</b>	Sole Proprietorship
<b>Business Began</b>	2009
<b>Employees</b>	7
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Linda Sutton

One often hears the expression, "Where there is a will, there is a way." In John and Amber Klassen's case, it was more like "Where there is passion, there is a way." Amber graduated from cosmetology school and opened a salon in LaCrosse for 5 ½ years, while John pursued a traditional business management career. But after John was offered an area supervisor position in Salina, he decided also to follow his passion and attend cosmetology school so he and his wife could team up and build a business together. This is where their journey began.

While John was still in school, they started traveling back and forth to Salina to do research. They heard about the KSBDC and contacted Linda Sutton. The Klassens attended several NCK SBDC seminars before and after their move. Linda played an integral role in helping them find resources to study the demographics of Salina. Linda's assistance with projections was essential so that the Klassens knew exactly what it was going to take to succeed!

The Klassens' road to success has been a very exciting adventure while still offering challenges. Thiessen-Elise Salon opened January 2009 just after the holidays with a recession on the horizon. The Klassens did not know anyone in Salina but were determined for their business to succeed. They wanted to use the uniqueness of their historic Salina downtown location to create a salon with a classic, sophisticated New York City-style look. "We wanted customers to have a real historical feel when they walked in," Amber Klassen said.

Thiessen-Elise Salon uses traditional advertising, including a website [www.tesalon.com](http://www.tesalon.com). However, hosting and being a part of events have been a great success for the business. In 2010 the salon hosted the Pink Pumpkin Painting Party to raise awareness for breast cancer after winning the window competition in 2009. Proceeds from Cuts for a Cure were donated to the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. Thiessen-Elise Salon's annual Fashion/Runway Show has also become a hit. Since the Klassens are passionate about what they do, it is easy to give back to others and the community.

John shared, "The best part about being an entrepreneur and having our own business is the sense of accomplishment. At the end of the day when you have helped your client achieve a new look and a new found confidence, have set a new system in place, and earned money doing it, it is very rewarding! Your passion for success must be greater than your fear of failure."

### Secret to Success

"One word we would use to describe the best thing about being a successful small business owner is- PASSION!"

# 2010 Existing Business of the Year



**"Prior to starting and along the way, the KSBDC has remained a vital part of our decision making process to help us succeed. It is an invaluable resource."**



*Left to right: Todd, Schwartz, Troy Lott, and Heath Balderston.*

[www.intakestudio.com](http://www.intakestudio.com)

**Wichita State University  
Kansas Small Business  
Development Center**

5015 E. 29<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Wichita, Kansas 67220-2110  
(316) 978-3193  
[www.wichita.edu/ksbdc](http://www.wichita.edu/ksbdc)

## Intake Studio

<b>Owners</b>	Heath Balderston, Roberta Feist, Troy Lott, Todd Schwartz
<b>Nature of Business</b>	Video Production
<b>City</b>	Wichita
<b>County</b>	Sedgwick
<b>Phone</b>	316 - 253- 7847
<b>Business Structure</b>	LLC
<b>Business Began</b>	2004
<b>Employees</b>	9
<b>KSBDC Consultant</b>	Frank Choriego and Alan Badgley

The decision to move forward and turn a passion into a business reality for three individuals was based in-part on their belief that a real void existed in the industry they wanted to target. For Troy Lott, Todd Schwartz and Heath Balderston, their belief that there was an opening for a video production company that could emphasize a strong creative design was their driving factor to begin that pursuit. Their diverse backgrounds became one of their main strengths that they have been able to rely upon for their success.

The trio contacted the KSBDC before starting their business. Their KSBDC consultant, Frank Choriego, advised them step-by-step through the development of their business plan. Troy said, "Without a doubt, this was key to helping us initiate a strategy to get our business started successfully. The KSBDC has continued to play an important role in our expansion and success since we opened the doors in 2004. It was during our strategic planning session two years ago that we cast the vision of expanding to another market." That is now a reality with their office in the Kansas City Market.

### Secret to Success

**"From the day we opened our doors, we've always said the key to our success would be equal components of great creative products and great customer service. We believe this has made us who we are today." – Troy Lott**

In a talent intensive industry, accumulating a full palette of offerings is a major challenge. They overcame this challenge by putting together a team of talented people that were passionate about their work. "With the right team in place, we have found success by continually pushing the company forward and staying fresh, competitive, bold and more creative than the next guy," says Troy.

Making informed decisions prior to starting and while operating your business is recommended by the trio. Troy says, "I always tell people to go for it." However, diving deeper into the conversation you hear a balanced approach seems to be the framework for success. Creativity coupled with business management while maintaining happy customers seems to be the successful combination for Intake Studio.

They believe that being a successful part of their community's economic engine, is one of the best things about being an entrepreneur. Along with their found success, Intake Studio has made it a part of their company policy to reach out to their community to support various organizations that could benefit from Intake's assistance. They believe that their involvement has helped to define them as successful members of their community.

Enjoying success within the confines of a fun place to work makes for a very happy team of owners and employees. As Troy puts it, "All in all, I don't believe there's anything that we would rather be doing."





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Thank you for your continued support!



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